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ABSTRACT

In 1975, the Center for the Study of Community Colleges conducted a national survey of humanities faculty in two-year colleges. This paper summarizes the characteristics of 210 foreign language instructors included in the total sample of 1,493 full- and part-time faculty. Findings of the survey include: (1) females outnumbered males by 54% to 46% respectively; (2) 79% reported that they were white/Caucasian; (3) almost two-thirds had functioned as instructors or administrators in secondary schools; (4) 20% had functioned as instructors or administrators in either a four-year college or university; (5) 60% were considered to be full-time instructors; (6) 37% were employed in jobs in addition to their teaching position at the surveyed institution; (7) 68% responded that they read no professional journals; (8) 15% indicated that they were working toward a master's degree and 21% toward the doctorate; (9) foreign language instructors rated what they are presently doing very attractive and second only to a faculty position at a four-year college or university; (10) foreign language instructors ranked self-knowledge and personal identity as the most important qualities students should gain from a two-year college education; and (11) 94% reported they had never presented a paper. For the full survey report, see ED 121 358. (JDS)

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A PROFILE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTORS IN TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

A nationwide survey of 1493 people teaching the humanities in 156 two-year colleges--carefully selected in terms of locale, control, emphasis, size and age--was conducted in spring, 1975 by the Center for the Study of Community Colleges. The faculty sample was drawn to include proportionate numbers of both full-time and part-time instructors. Sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the project revealed demographic data as well as attitudes toward students and the humanities, reference group identification, satisfaction, and preference for further preparation. In this paper the foreign language instructors in the sample are compared with the total group of faculty in art, anthropology, foreign language, history, liberal arts/drama, literature, music, philosophy, political science, religious studies, and social science.

The 210 foreign language instructors in the sample of 1493 constituted 14%* of the total population teaching humanities. Except for literature (27%) and history (16%), the foreign language instructors were the largest disciplinary sub-group. These instructors--and foreign language in our definition includes people teaching English as a Second Language--occasionally also teach history, literature, philosophy, or social science, but the overlap is limited. While 76% held their highest degree in foreign language, 12% indicated literature, 10% education, 6% linguistics, and 5% history--a few obviously holding a dual major.

Of these 210 people, 27% had themselves been students in two-year colleges, close to 25% of the total group. Unlike the total group, as well as all other disciplines, however, more foreign language instructors are females than males. Males constitute 46% of this group and females represent 54%, while the total is 33% and other disciplines vary from 44% females (literature) to 12% (law/government). As far as age goes, the largest cluster (17%) falls into the 31-35 year range, followed by 15% who are 46-50, 14% 26-30, and 12% 51-55.

One would expect that people in foreign languages would represent a broader ethnic base than other disciplines, and this expectation is fulfilled by all disciplines except the social science. Whereas the total population is 91% Caucasian, 74% of the social scientists are in this group and 79% of the foreign language people. Mexican/American/Chicanos backgrounds are designated by 8% of the population and "other" was selected by 8%, the largest single discipline so indicating.

*All figures are rounded.

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Books

Foreign language instructors and anthropologists indicated the greatest percent who claim over 200 books in the home in which they were raised, 43% as contrasted with 38% total. Twenty-six to 100 books is designated by 24% foreign language people (27% total) and 101-200 by 16% (20% total).

Experience

Almost two-thirds of the foreign language people had functioned as instructors or administrators in secondary schools. Of these, 22% had spent 5-10 years at this level; 12%, 1-2 years; and 8%, 3-4 years.

And almost two-third claimed no time in a four-year college or university as instructors or administrators, beyond the level of teaching or research assistants. One to two years and 5 to 10 years in this capacity were designated by 10% each. Within any two-year college, 31% indicated 5-10 years; 19% 1-2 years; and 15% 3-4 years and 11-20 years. Whereas 14% of the foreign language people (10% total) had worked in their current institution less than one year, 34% (42% total) indicated 5-10 years, 19% 1-2 years (14% total), 14% 3-4 years (17% total), and 14% 11-20 years. Seventy-one percent of the foreign language instructors had not acted as department or division chairpersons, 81% had not been director of special programs (such as Ethnic Studies), and 84% had not held positions as administrators.

Chairpersons

Because of special concern with the status of doctorate holders, certain questions were asked of the 13% foreign language instructors who were currently acting as chairpersons in their departments or divisions. Thirty-seven percent responded that they had previously employed people with doctorates (48% total), 85% indicated no pressure either way to do so (57% total), and 56% said they planned to so hire (61% total). When asked why they planned to hire or not hire people with this advanced degree, 19% of the foreign language people (30% total) indicated they would "Hire the best person regardless of degree," the third lowest group so noting. "They are more capable/knowledgeable" was mentioned by 11% of the foreign language respondents and 15% of the total sample. Interestingly, though, foreign language people constituted by far the largest group of respondents (30%) (11% total) who either responded with a "Don't know" or failed to respond to this item.

When asked about their experience with doctorate holders, foreign language people were again high in the "Don't know/no answer" category (26%, 20% total) but they reversed the pattern when it came to the response "They are fine/excellent/good teachers" (30% foreign language,

24% total).

Hours Teaching/Full-Time/Part-Time

Whereas more foreign language instructors tend to spend 9 or less hours in classroom instruction each week, fewer are so involved from 10-15 hours. The dip reverts itself at 16-18 hours and over 18 hours when more foreign language people are engaged in the classroom. Eleven percent of the foreign language instructors, as compared with 8% total, designate more than 18 hours.

It is interesting to note that fewer foreign language instructors (60%, 76% total) are considered to be full-time instructors than any other of our disciplinary groups. Whether this reflects the lowered incidence of foreign language in two-year colleges or some other condition is open to speculation. It would be interesting, of course, to compare these figures with other data compiled on a national basis, but no such information is available.

We do know now, however, that more foreign language people (37%) than the total sample (26%) are employed in jobs in addition to their teaching positions at the institution under surveillance. Of these, 31% (36% total) are so involved for 1-10 hours, 30% (24% total) for 31-40 hours, and 14% each for 11-20 hours (17% total) and 21-30 hours (10% total).

Reference Groups

Of all eight possible choices, most of the eleven disciplinary groups rank their colleagues first as the most useful and students second as "quite useful" sources of advice on teaching. Foreign language instructors do differ from the total group in terms of the areas ranked third and down to eighth. In descending order, they select as "quite useful" professional journals, department chairpersons, programs of professional organizations, university professors, high school teachers and finally administration (the last two reference groups are rated by all instructors consistently with the total group).

Foreign language instructors are much the same as the total group when it comes to the number of scholarly journals read in their disciplines. Slightly more instructors in this field (68%) than the total group (64%) say they read no professional education journals, and these tendencies to fewer pertain when one, two, and three journals are indicated. When it comes to journals or magazines of general interest, even more foreign language (87%) than total (78%) repondents respond with a "none," and fewer foreign language people indicate one and two such media.

Faculty Development

Almost twice as many foreign language people (15%) as the total sample (7%) indicate that they are now working on a master's degree. Slightly fewer (21% foreign language, 24% total) designate the doctorate. And again only slightly fewer respond "yes" when asked whether they would like to take steps toward professional development in the next five years (84% foreign language, 86% total). Of these, 36% of the foreign language people said they would like to enroll in courses in a university; 34% desired to obtain the Ph.D. or Ed.D.; 7%, the Doctor of Arts; 15%, get a master's degree; and 12%, enroll in in-service courses at their colleges.

When these same people were asked what they would do if they had a free summer, more foreign language instructors than instructors in any other of the eleven selected disciplines wrote "travel." Here 70% of the foreign language and 53% of the total group so responded. In descending order were the following other designated choices: Meet classes/do workshops, take classes/study/read, recreation/rest, write for publication and work on advanced degrees. The percent of people so designating these responses is fairly close to the total group but in terms of another choice, "do research," foreign language instructors (5%) represented about half the total group (9%).

Asked what type of training they would seek were they to begin all over again, foreign language respondents are less likely than other disciplines to say do same/change nothing (25% foreign language, 33% total). On the other hand, more foreign language teachers (12%) than the total (9%) would choose to do more student teaching and take more teaching methods courses (13% foreign language, 9% total). Incidentally, the foreign language people represent the discipline most likely to choose the latter.

The Future

An item in the faculty survey regarding plans is both an indicator of satisfaction and a key to the future. Like the total group, foreign language people rank as very attractive a faculty position at a four-year college or university; second, doing what they are presently doing; third, a school outside the United States; fourth, a faculty position at another community or junior college; fifth, an administrative position in a community or junior college; eighth, having no idea; and ninth (last), any position but the college in which they are now working. They differ from the total group only in terms of their sixth choice (seventh for the total), a position in a professional association; and the seventh (sixth for the total), a non-teaching, non-academic position.

Affiliation

Foreign language people appear to be much like their counterparts comprising the total group when it comes to affiliation with professional organizations. A few less (22%) indicated they are not members of a professional organization, and that they had not attended a regional/national meeting in the past three years (51%). A few more (94%) report they had not presented a paper. Yet, more foreign language people (18%) than the total group (16%) said they were members of three professional organizations, and had attended one or two regional or national meetings. One paper was presented by about half as many foreign language people as the combined population.

The way repsondents see themselves in terms of various reference groups is another indicator of affiliation or, as we call the item delineating relationship, group cohesion. Here there are no surprises; both the group of foreign language instructors and the total group of humanities respondents rank their relationship to significant others in their lives in exactly the same order. They first select friends and then, in order of importance, family, other instructors in their field, most instructors at their school, students, teacher organizations and last, college administrators.

Students

Foreign language instructors are again quite consistent with the total group regarding qualities students should gain from a two-year college education. They rank first, self-knowledge and a personal identity, then tied for second, knowledge of and interest in community and world problems (second for total) and preparation for further formal education (third for the total population). Next is knowledge and skills directly applicable to student careers, aesthetic awareness, and finally, an understanding and mastery of some academic discipline--this last option again consistent with the total sample.

When it comes to the number of courses foreign language instructors think students in two-year occupational programs should be required to take, six or more is the number most often indicated. Then, in descending order, follow four, five, three, two, none, and one.

Foreign language instructors do differ considerably from the total group of humanities people, however, in terms of non-course related activities. When asked whether five separate activities offered to students were too few, sufficient, or too many, foreign language people fell below the total in terms of "too few" for all five activities. Accordingly, they fell above the total group in terms of the adequacy of these activities. Like the total population, however, more foreign language people ranked colloquiums and seminars highest in being to

few, followed in order by concerts and recitals, exhibits, films, and lectures.

Experience and Curriculum

Like all our disciplines, foreign language instructors experience the humanities other than through their teaching chiefly by attending art museums, exhibits, concerts, theatres and films (52% foreign language, 59% total). Fewer indicate reading (47% foreign language, 50% total), listening to records and radio or watching TV (17% foreign language, 21% total), participating in theatre groups, fine arts or opera (7% foreign language, 16% total) or engaging in community service and church work (9% foreign language, 10% total). More foreign language instructors, however, cite attendance at classes, lectures or seminars (22% foreign language, 19% total), everyday experiences (17% foreign language, 16% total), talking with peers and associates (19% foreign language, 15% total) and traveling (19% foreign language, 14% total).

Understanding faculty includes also an awareness of the work situation in which these subjects find themselves. Therefore, a critical item asked each respondent about the change in humanities instruction that had occurred at their colleges in the past seven years. Like all other groups, foreign language people responded that humanities courses had been added or improved (21% foreign language, 29% total).

When it comes to the changes they would like to see affected, foreign language people again are in accord with the total group of respondents. They rank first the addition and/or improvement of humanities courses and next the integration of humanities into interdisciplinary courses. Somewhat more foreign language instructors also point to more student interest in courses, more involvement in classes, and the reemphasis of basic skills.

Schools

With the exception of religious studies people, more foreign language instructors than members of any other disciplinary group included in this survey are in private schools. This only represents 16% of the foreign language people, however, who by far are working in public colleges (84% foreign language, 89% total). For 92% (90% total) the emphasis is comprehensive rather than vocational/technical (2%) or liberal arts (5%). For this field, most of these schools (49%) were founded from 1960-1969. Nearly as many foreign language instructors (42%), however, work in schools built in 1959 or earlier. The greatest cluster (22%) of foreign language teachers is found in schools with 5000-7499 students, while only slightly less (18%) are in schools of 2500-4999 students, and 15% are in institutions of 15,000 and larger.

Most are single campus colleges (70% of the foreign language instructors.

In Sum

And so, our profile of people teaching foreign languages in two-year colleges throughout the country. What the data do not indicate here are the types of languages taught. The most popular is Spanish with French falling second. The classics are hardly ever taught in two-year colleges. And many people, especially in the smaller colleges, teach foreign language in addition to another specialty.

What is especially interesting is that foreign language people, who comprise the third highest disciplinary group in our sample of 1493 humanities people, and who represent a broader ethnic and cultural background than most other groups, are not very different from the total sample.

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